

# £750 PCs

## INTRODUCTION

Many home computers have several users with widely varying needs, but today's desktop PCs provide for them all. You can surf the internet, download music, edit your digital photos, watch DVDs on a large LCD or play the latest 3D games. You could even do some office work, or just look busy while playing Solitaire.

Desktop PCs are also expandable as well as versatile. If you want, you can easily add new capabilities, such as a TV tuner or wireless networking card. If, a few years down the line, you find that your computer is a little slow, you can add a newer, faster processor.

This month we've tested six of the latest desktop PCs. They're all ready to take on a wide range of tasks today, and can be upgraded in future if required. And, at less than £750 including VAT, they won't break the bank. Whatever you need from a computer, we'll help you pick the perfect PC.

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# PERFECT HOME PCs

If your family shares one PC but you all want it to do different things, you'll have trouble choosing the right model. We test six capable computers to help you find the perfect PC for all seasons

## Choosing a... £750 PC

**T**his month we're looking for a PC that can take on a wide range of tasks. You can get a surprisingly powerful PC for £750 these days, but there's more to consider than our benchmark results. Our buying guide helps you identify what to look for, and what you can safely ignore.

### DISPLAY TEAM

We put every monitor through a range of demanding tests. We scrutinised each one while displaying HD video files, photos and games, and then used special test files with graduated and plain colours and greyscales. None of the displays here has particularly bad image quality, but a few aren't good enough for tasks such as photo editing. Our reviews explain which are impressive and which are merely good.

Most of the PCs here come with standard 17in or 19in monitors. These are almost square in shape, and have a native resolution of 1,280x1,024 pixels. They provide enough desktop space for most tasks, and are ideal for office work.

The PCs from Evesham and Gladiator come with widescreen displays that have an aspect ratio of 16:10. This makes them ideal for watching DVDs and playing the latest games. Some people prefer widescreen

monitors for work, as they make it easy to use two applications side by side. The vertical resolution of these screens is lower, though, so they're not as good for word processing or web browsing.

Having a decent set of speakers will enhance your enjoyment of movies and games, as well as making the most of music. The Evesham Solar and PC Nextday Zoostorm have the best stereo speakers here, while Mesh's Elite has a 5.1 surround-sound set.

A good keyboard and mouse are essential for comfortable computing. Fortunately, only the set supplied by Aria fell below our expectations. Three of the PCs here come with cordless mouse and keyboard sets. These reduce desk clutter, but you will need to replace the batteries occasionally.

### UNDER THE BONNET

At the heart of every PC is the motherboard. A good motherboard provides plenty of ports for adding peripherals, and enough slots for later upgrades. Most of the PCs here have free memory slots, so you can add more memory without discarding the original modules. The Eclipse Ultimate and Evesham Solar PCs don't have any usable spare slots, though, so adding more memory will be expensive. All the PCs have spare





SATA ports and PCI slots, so adding a new hard disk or a TV tuner won't be a problem. Mesh's Elite has a spare PCI Express x16 slot, so you can easily add more 3D power.

All the PCs here have plenty of USB ports on the front and back of the case, so you'll have no problem plugging in a variety of peripherals such as printers and digital cameras. PC Nextday's Zoostorm includes a wireless network adaptor.

Every computer in this group has a hard disk with at least 250GB of storage space, and PC Nextday's Zoostorm has a 320GB disk. With a DVD writer fitted to each PC, you'll also be able to burn backups to disc and write home movies to DVD. The Mesh Elite and PC Nextday Zoostorm have memory card readers, so digital photographers and smartphone owners can transfer data to their PCs without using a cable.

### CORE CONSIDERATIONS

For £750 you should expect a desktop PC that can tackle any task you throw at it, and do so quickly. All the PCs here have plenty of memory, and all but the Aria Family Extra have dual-core processors. Dual-core processors are noticeably faster in some applications, and are particularly useful if you edit video files. Eclipse's Ultimate has the fastest dual-core processor here and is particularly powerful.

The type of graphics card installed dictates the amount of 3D gaming performance you'll

get. Gladiator's Praetorian has a particularly powerful graphics card and ran both our 3D benchmarks very quickly, making it the best choice for regular gamers.

Most of the PCs here are supplied with Windows XP Home Edition, which has all the features you need for day-to-day home computing. Evesham's Solar comes with Windows XP Media Center Edition installed, which includes some extra features that make browsing and viewing media files simple. Aria's

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Family Extra includes a free upgrade to the new Windows Vista Home Basic operating system – see our review on page 46 for details.

Modern PCs are generally very reliable but problems can and do occur, so a good warranty is vital. The most basic warranties here offer only a year's worth of service on the PC, which must be returned to the manufacturer should a fault occur. The best warranties are provided by Evesham and PC Nextday, with product support for three years.

## Seeing double Adding a second display

Every PC in this test has two video outputs, making it easy to use two displays at once.

By connecting an old monitor to the second video output you can instantly double the size of your Windows desktop. This is very useful if you have two applications open at once, or if you use complex software such as video-editing packages.

Most of the graphics cards have DVI connectors, so you'll need a DVI-to-D-sub adaptor to connect an older display. Fortunately, these adaptors cost

only a few pounds. Connect the second display to your graphics card and Windows

will detect it automatically. Right-click on the Windows desktop and choose the Properties option. Select the Settings tab and click on the box marked '2'. Then check the tickbox to extend the desktop on to this monitor. If your second monitor is to the left of your original one, rather than to its right, click and drag the box marked '2' to the left of the box marked '1'.



▲ Adding a second display takes only a few clicks





## ARIA Family Extra 3800+



£749 inc VAT and delivery

This PC comes with lots of extras and is capable of performing a wide range of tasks straight from the box. It's not very fast in Windows, though.

### FEATURES

Aria has included an Epson R265 photo inkjet printer. This is an excellent printer that's ideal for digital photographers, but we've seen far better inkjets for printing text. The large software bundle includes a copy of Microsoft Office Student and Teacher Edition 2003. This should be useful to just about anyone, but you must have a student or teacher living in your household to qualify to use this special edition.

The total cost of all these extras, if bought separately, is £188. It's not surprising, then, that sacrifices have been made elsewhere. It has a 17in monitor, where all the other PCs have 19in models. It's not the brightest display here, but it has wide viewing angles.

The speakers, keyboard and mouse are some of the worst we've ever seen and will all need replacing. Aria provides only a one-year return-to-base warranty.

### PERFORMANCE

This is the only PC in the group to use a single-core processor. Its AMD Athlon 64 3800+ runs at 2.4GHz, and the PC came third in our image-manipulation test. It couldn't keep up in the video-editing and multitasking benchmarks, though, so its overall score of 125 is the worst in the group.

The Aria uses an Nvidia GeForce 6800GT graphics chip. When first released this was among the fastest available, and its score of 51.6fps in our Doom 3 test is impressive. It's far slower in more recent games, though, and managed only 19.1fps in Call of Duty 2.

### VERDICT

The older parts Aria has used make this PC fairly slow in many of our benchmarks, but it's the monitor, keyboard and speakers that really disappoint. The extras are nice, but we think most people would rather select their own software and printer.

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Printer and software bundle
- ✗ Single-core processor limits speed
- ✗ Terrible peripherals; limited warranty

DESKTOP PC AMD Athlon 64 3800+, 1GB RAM, 250GB hard disk, 256MB Albatron GeForce 6800GT, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 17in LCD

SUPPLIER Aria 08704 992499

DETAILS [www.aria.co.uk](http://www.aria.co.uk)



## ECLIPSE Ultimate Family i6600



£750 inc VAT and delivery

The Eclipse Ultimate has the fastest processor in the group, and is a good choice if you want to perform tough computing tasks.

### FEATURES

Eclipse has chosen a strange motherboard for the Ultimate. The ASRock 775Dual-VSTA has two DDR2 slots, which are both filled, and two DDR slots, which can't be used at the same time as the DDR2 slots. This means you can't upgrade the memory without throwing away the memory you have already.

The 19in AMW monitor produces a bright, clean white, but black areas looked slightly purple. Its vertical viewing angles are limited, so you'll see pink and green shades if you move your head off centre. Our HD video test looked a little soft, and our colour test lacked vibrancy. There are no major flaws, but we prefer the AOC monitor that comes with the Zoostorm.

The Microsoft keyboard and mouse are comfortable, but the Logitech S200 2.1 speakers are nothing to get excited about. Only one year of return-to-base cover is provided.

### PERFORMANCE

The Intel Core 2 Duo E6600 processor used here is the most powerful in the group. It's dual-core, and has more cache memory than the other Intel processors. It came first in all our *Shopper* application benchmarks, scoring a massive 192 overall. The Eclipse will complete any task ahead of its competitors.

It's no slouch in 3D games either, thanks to a GeForce 7900GS graphics card. It produced 69.3fps in our Doom 3 test, the highest score in the group. It was less impressive in our Call of Duty 2 test, coming joint third with 23.3fps. It will run all the latest games smoothly, but the Gladiator is a better choice for gamers.

### VERDICT

Those looking for maximum performance should consider this PC. However, upgrading the memory isn't easy, and the PC Nextday PC has a better monitor and storage options.

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Very fast in applications
- ✓ Good for gaming
- ✗ Hard to upgrade memory; limited warranty

DESKTOP PC Intel Core 2 Duo E6600, 1GB RAM, 250GB hard disk, 256MB Xpertvision GeForce 7900GS, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 19in LCD

SUPPLIER Eclipse 08707 456000

DETAILS [www.eclipse-computers.com](http://www.eclipse-computers.com)



## EVESHAM Solar GS



£749 inc VAT and delivery

With a widescreen monitor and Windows XP Media Center Edition, this PC is perfect for enjoying video files.

### FEATURES

The Cibox monitor has a native resolution of 1,440x900 pixels, giving you roughly the same amount of desktop space as the other monitors here. Its image quality was generally good, but our tests showed up problems displaying finely graduated colours and greys. This makes the monitor unsuitable for photo-editing work.

Windows XP Media Center Edition is a useful addition to any PC. It gives easy access to all your media files through one interface. If you add a TV tuner you can take advantage of its excellent electronic programme guide as well. The Creative i-Trigue 3220 speakers are the best in this test. They're excellently balanced with no audible gap between the satellite and subwoofer frequencies.

The microATX motherboard has only two memory slots, both of which are full, so you'll have to discard the supplied modules if you want to add more RAM. The passively cooled graphics card helps keep noise to a minimum.

### PERFORMANCE

The Solar is one of three PCs here with an Intel Core 2 Duo E6300 processor and 1GB of RAM. It produced a respectable overall score of 155 in our application benchmarks, placing it in the middle of the group. It's powerful enough to take on even the toughest tasks, but is not as quick as Eclipse's Ultimate.

The Solar came last in both our 3D gaming tests. Its Nvidia GeForce 7600GS chip runs at 400MHz, compared to 560MHz for the GT version. It managed a playable 29.7fps in our Doom 3 test, but ran our Call of Duty 2 test at 17.8fps. You'd need to reduce detail levels to get smooth frame rates in the latest games.

### VERDICT

The Solar's monitor, speakers and operating system are all great for a media PC, but with very limited gaming performance this PC isn't quite as entertaining as it could have been.

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Windows XP Media Center Edition
- ✓ Good speakers; widescreen monitor
- ✗ Slow in games

DESKTOP PC Intel Core 2 Duo E6300, 1GB RAM, 250GB hard disk, 256MB Leadtek WinFast PX7600 GS TDH, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 19in widescreen LCD

SUPPLIER Evesham 08701 609500

DETAILS [www.evesham.com](http://www.evesham.com)



## GLADIATOR Praetorian CS6300

★★★★★

£749 inc VAT and delivery

If you're looking for a bit of virtual combat, the Praetorian's fast graphics card will give you a fighting chance.

### FEATURES

This PC uses the same widescreen monitor as Evesham's Solar. Many games can take advantage of widescreen displays, and the vast majority of new games have a widescreen mode. The monitor has three buttons just behind the display. These are easy to reach, and make adjusting the monitor settings easy.

The silver-fronted case is one of the better-looking ones here. The motherboard has all the slots you'll need for stress-free upgrading in future. There's no memory card reader, but the 250GB hard disk is big enough for both media files and big game installations. Unfortunately, the system is rather loud, with the processor fan making a lot more noise than is necessary.

The speakers aren't the best we've heard, but there is a subwoofer that produces plenty of bass for gaming. The two-year warranty includes one year of onsite service.

### PERFORMANCE

Like the Mesh and Evesham PCs, the Praetorian uses an Intel Core 2 Duo E6300 processor. Gladiator has fitted faster PC2-5300 memory, but it made little difference in our tests and the Praetorian just edged ahead of Evesham's Solar. It produced a respectable overall score of 156, and is powerful enough for most tasks.

In our 3D tests the Praetorian's Radeon X1950 Pro-based graphics card performed outstandingly. It was a few frames behind the Eclipse PC in our Doom 3 test, but still produced a silky smooth 65.6fps. In our more-demanding Call of Duty 2 test it produced 42.0fps, making it almost 20fps faster than its nearest competitor. This PC is capable of running the latest games in high detail.

### VERDICT

The Praetorian is a great PC with a powerful graphics card. It's the obvious choice for gamers, and a decent alternative to the PC Nextday Zoostorm.

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Very powerful graphics card
- ✓ Widescreen monitor
- ✗ Loud processor fan

DESKTOP PC Intel Core 2 Duo E6300, 1GB RAM, 250GB hard disk, 256MB Sapphire Radeon X1950 Pro, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 19in widescreen LCD  
SUPPLIER Gladiator 08456 444666  
DETAILS [www.gladiatorcomputers.com](http://www.gladiatorcomputers.com)



## MESH Elite E6300 Duo CSX

★★★★★

£749 inc VAT and delivery

With an unusual monitor, a large black case and surround-sound speakers, the Mesh Elite will certainly stand out on your desktop.

### FEATURES

The Elite's case is the biggest one here, and its chunky yet curvaceous design is distinctive. Inside it's very spacious and well built. It has two FireWire ports for camcorder users, and two PCI Express x16 slots should you wish to add a second graphics card using SLI. As well as 5.1 surround-sound outputs there's a coaxial S/PDIF output for connecting a surround-sound amplifier. A set of Creative Inspire T6100 5.1 surround-sound speakers is included.

The 19in Sony monitor has a distinctive design, but its position can't be easily adjusted. It's the only one here with a gloss finish that enhances contrast and makes black areas look inky. It has great viewing angles, too. Sadly it performed poorly in our colour and greyscale transition tests, so it's unsuitable for photo-editing work. The memory card reader on the front of the case will be useful for digital photographers. Mesh provides a three-year warranty, of which the first year is onsite.

### PERFORMANCE

The Elite has the same processor and amount of memory as the Evesham and Gladiator PCs. It was a little slower in some of our benchmarks, though. However, it still scored 151 points overall. This puts it in fifth place, but it's only marginally behind the Gladiator Praetorian and Evesham Solar.

It performed fairly well in both our 3D gaming tests. Its Nvidia GeForce 7600GT chip ran Doom 3 at 46.2fps, and Call of Duty 2 at 23.3fps. It's not as powerful as the Gladiator PC, but it runs games with reasonable detail.

### VERDICT

There's a lot to like about the Elite, but it doesn't excel in any one area. Gamers will prefer the Praetorian, and the Zoostorm is a superior PC for general use.

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Can be upgraded to SLI
- ✓ Three-year warranty
- ✗ Slightly slower than other similar PCs

DESKTOP PC Intel Core 2 Duo E6300, 1GB RAM, 250GB hard disk, 256MB Asus EN7600GT/2DHT/256M, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 19in LCD  
SUPPLIER Mesh 08700 464747  
DETAILS [www.meshcomputers.com](http://www.meshcomputers.com)



## PC NEXTDAY Zoostorm 2-5404 Versatile PC

★★★★★

£749 inc VAT and delivery



The Zoostorm is a well-equipped and well-balanced PC, with plenty of power in Windows and 3D games.

### FEATURES

The Zoostorm's case may be bland and bulky, but it has plenty to offer. At the top is a memory card reader, and below that are two optical drives so you can copy from disc to disc. Its 320GB hard disk is the biggest in the group.

The case is awkward to open, but there's plenty of space inside for future upgrades. There's no case fan to draw warm air out, so it's not particularly loud when in use. PC Nextday has fitted a wireless network card to this PC, so it's easy to connect to a wireless broadband internet connection.

The 19in AOC monitor has no serious flaws. It showed good colour balance and contrast when playing our HD video test file. We spotted some banding in our greyscale test, but colours looked vibrant and text was crisp. The 2.1 speakers sound very clear, and are made of wood rather than the usual plastic. PC Nextday provides a three-year onsite warranty.

### PERFORMANCE

The Zoostorm has an Intel Core 2 Duo E6400 processor. This runs at 2.16GHz, and performs noticeably faster than most of the processors in the other PCs here. It came second in our application tests, with an overall score of 174. Only the Eclipse is quicker.

The Zoostorm also performed well in our 3D game tests. It produced 48.1fps in Doom 3 and an impressive 24.4fps in Call of Duty 2. Gaming obsessives should choose Gladiator's Praetorian, but the Zoostorm is fast enough for occasional gaming.

### VERDICT

It's not the fastest in applications or games, but the Zoostorm performs well in both. It also has a large hard disk, a good monitor and some useful speakers. With a three-year warranty as well, the Zoostorm is the best PC here.

### SUMMARY

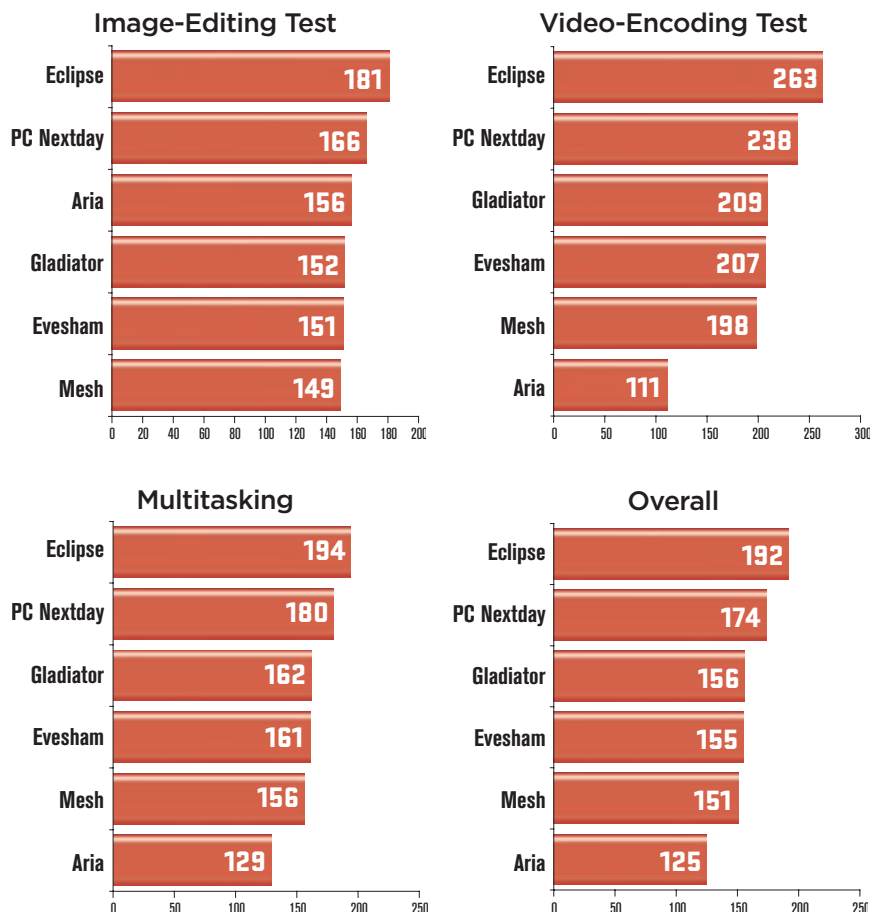
- ✓ Performs well in 2D and 3D
- ✓ Large hard disk; good monitor
- ✓ Three-year warranty

DESKTOP PC Intel Core 2 Duo E6400, 1GB RAM, 320GB hard disk, 256MB Inno3D GF 7600GT, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, DVD-ROM, 19in LCD  
SUPPLIER sales@pcnextday.co.uk  
DETAILS [www.pcnextday.co.uk](http://www.pcnextday.co.uk)



# BENCHMARKS

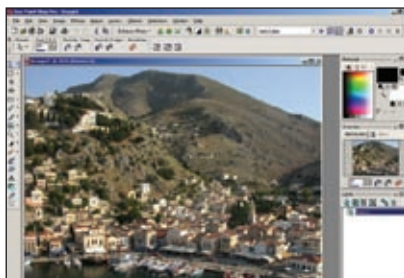
## 2D Performance Shopper Application Tests



Computer Shopper's 2D benchmarks have been designed to show how PCs stand up to the toughest tasks Windows can throw at them. Today's PCs have no problem running office applications such as Word and Excel, so we have chosen to focus our tests on areas where you could experience difficulties.

Encoding a short video to MPEG2 format is a processor-intensive task that anyone transferring home videos to DVD will have to tackle. Our image-editing test simulates a session of photo enhancement using Paint Shop Pro X. In our third test, a set of audio files is ripped to MP3 format.

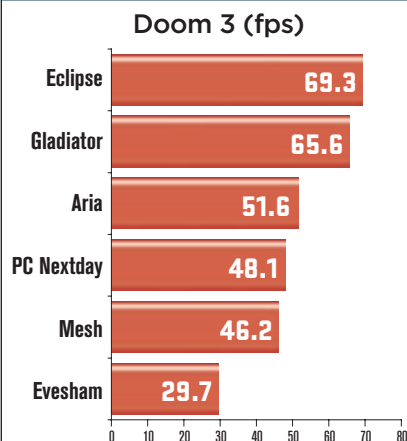
Finally, we have a multitasking test designed to test the benefits of HyperThreaded and dual-core processors. This test compresses a DVD at the same time as running our



**SETTINGS** We run our application tests at 1,280x1,024 resolution and in 32-bit colour  
**WEB** [www.computershopper.co.uk](http://www.computershopper.co.uk)

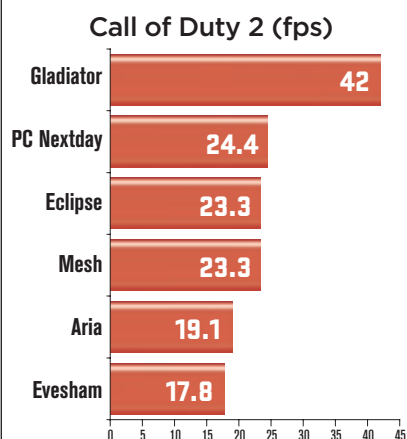
image-editing test. Figures are relative to a reference Evesham Athlon 64 3500+, which scores 100 in all tests.

## 3D Performance Games



**SETTINGS** 1,280x1,024 resolution, high quality, 4x AA  
**WEB** [www.doom3.com](http://www.doom3.com)

Our Doom 3 benchmark tests whether a PC has the power needed to play cutting-edge 3D games. A good score here indicates that a PC should cope with graphically intense 3D games.



**SETTINGS** 1,280x1,024 resolution, 32-bit colour, default settings  
**WEB** [www.futuremark.com](http://www.futuremark.com)

Call of Duty 2 uses DirectX and is one of the most demanding games available. With a wide range of effects and frenetic action, it tests every aspect of graphics performance.

## Labs verdict £750 PCs

We were impressed by most of the PCs in this test, but a few stand out as particularly good value. If you use your PC primarily for gaming, the Gladiator Praetorian is a great choice. It has an extremely powerful graphics card that makes the latest games look superb, and a widescreen display.

If you want to view video files, especially if you're considering adding a TV tuner,

Evesham's Solar would be a good choice. Windows XP Media Center Edition is installed, and it comes with a widescreen display and decent stereo speakers.

For general-purpose PC use, however, PC Nextday's Zoostorm is the best choice. It's powerful in Windows and can play 3D games. It has a large hard disk, and its display is the best in the group. It also has wireless

**BEST BUY** PC NEXTDAY  
**Zoostorm**  
**2-5404 Versatile PC**

★★★★★

networking built in, and comes with a three-year warranty. It's excellent value, and it wins our Best Buy award.



## E750 PCs



| MANUFACTURER                           | ARIA                                                                                                                                                                                                    | ECLIPSE                                                                                                                   | EVESHAM                                                                                                                                 | GLADIATOR                                                                                                                                   | MESH                                                                                                                                    | PC NEXTDAY                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Model name                             | Aria Family Extra 3800+                                                                                                                                                                                 | Ultimate Family i6600                                                                                                     | Solar GS                                                                                                                                | Praetorian CS6300                                                                                                                           | Elite E6300 Duo CSX                                                                                                                     | Zoostorm 2-5404 Versatile PC                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Rating                                 | ★★                                                                                                                                                                                                      | ★★★★                                                                                                                      | ★★★★                                                                                                                                    | ★★★★★                                                                                                                                       | ★★★★                                                                                                                                    | ★★★★★                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Processor                              | AMD Athlon 64 3800+                                                                                                                                                                                     | Intel Core 2 Duo E6600                                                                                                    | Intel Core 2 Duo E6300                                                                                                                  | Intel Core 2 Duo E6300                                                                                                                      | Intel Core 2 Duo E6300                                                                                                                  | Intel Core 2 Duo E6400                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Processor speed                        | 2.4GHz                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2.4GHz                                                                                                                    | 1.86GHz                                                                                                                                 | 1.86GHz                                                                                                                                     | 1.86GHz                                                                                                                                 | 2.13GHz                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Processor socket                       | AM2                                                                                                                                                                                                     | LGA775                                                                                                                    | LGA775                                                                                                                                  | LGA775                                                                                                                                      | LGA775                                                                                                                                  | LGA775                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Level 1 cache                          | 128KB                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 128KB                                                                                                                     | 128KB                                                                                                                                   | 128KB                                                                                                                                       | 128KB                                                                                                                                   | 128KB                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Level 2 cache                          | 512KB                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 4,096KB                                                                                                                   | 2,048KB                                                                                                                                 | 2,048KB                                                                                                                                     | 2,048KB                                                                                                                                 | 2,048KB                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Memory installed                       | 1GB                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1GB                                                                                                                       | 1GB                                                                                                                                     | 1GB                                                                                                                                         | 1GB                                                                                                                                     | 1GB                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Memory type                            | PC2-6400                                                                                                                                                                                                | PC2-5300                                                                                                                  | PC2-4300                                                                                                                                | PC2-5300                                                                                                                                    | PC2-4300                                                                                                                                | PC2-5300                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Maximum memory                         | 8GB                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2GB                                                                                                                       | 4GB                                                                                                                                     | 8GB                                                                                                                                         | 8GB                                                                                                                                     | 8GB                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Motherboard standard                   | ASRock AliveNF6G-DVI                                                                                                                                                                                    | ASRock 775Dual-VSTA                                                                                                       | Foxconn 946GZ7MA-KRS2H                                                                                                                  | P965 Neo                                                                                                                                    | Asus P5NSLI                                                                                                                             | ECS P965T-A                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Motherboard chipset                    | Nvidia NF6100-430                                                                                                                                                                                       | VIA PT880 Pro/Ultra                                                                                                       | Intel 946GZ                                                                                                                             | Intel P965                                                                                                                                  | Nvidia nForce 570 SLI                                                                                                                   | Intel P965                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Memory bus speed                       | 200MHz                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 333MHz                                                                                                                    | 266MHz                                                                                                                                  | 333MHz                                                                                                                                      | 266MHz                                                                                                                                  | 333MHz                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| BIOS                                   | AMI                                                                                                                                                                                                     | AMI                                                                                                                       | Phoenix                                                                                                                                 | Phoenix                                                                                                                                     | Phoenix                                                                                                                                 | Phoenix                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| PORTS                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| USB2 ports (front/rear)                | 2/4                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2/4                                                                                                                       | 2/4                                                                                                                                     | 2/4                                                                                                                                         | 3/4                                                                                                                                     | 3/4                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| FireWire ports (front/rear)            | 0/0                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 0/0                                                                                                                       | 0/0                                                                                                                                     | 0/0                                                                                                                                         | 0/2                                                                                                                                     | 0/0                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Wired and wireless networking          | 1x 10/100/1,000; none                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1x 10/100; none                                                                                                           | 1x 10/100/1,000; none                                                                                                                   | 1x 10/100/1,000; none                                                                                                                       | 1x 10/100/1,000; none                                                                                                                   | 1x 10/100/1,000; 802.11a/b/g                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Legacy ports                           | Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial                                                                                                                                                                               | Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial                                                                                                 | Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial                                                                                                               | Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial                                                                                                                   | Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial                                                                                                               | Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Other ports                            | None                                                                                                                                                                                                    | None                                                                                                                      | None                                                                                                                                    | None                                                                                                                                        | None                                                                                                                                    | None                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| INTERNAL EXPANSION                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Case                                   | Midi tower                                                                                                                                                                                              | Midi tower                                                                                                                | Midi tower                                                                                                                              | Midi tower                                                                                                                                  | Midi tower                                                                                                                              | Midi tower                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Case size HxWxD                        | 410x176x452mm                                                                                                                                                                                           | 430x190x444mm                                                                                                             | 429x198x490mm                                                                                                                           | 413x198x413mm                                                                                                                               | 472x200x452mm                                                                                                                           | 438x206x461mm                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| PCI (free)                             | 2 (1)                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 4 (2)                                                                                                                     | 2 (2)                                                                                                                                   | 3 (3)                                                                                                                                       | 2 (1)                                                                                                                                   | 3 (2)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| PCIe x1 (free)                         | 1 (1)                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 0 (0)                                                                                                                     | 1 (0)                                                                                                                                   | 2 (1)                                                                                                                                       | 2 (1)                                                                                                                                   | 2 (1)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| PCIe x16 (free)                        | 1 (0)                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1 (0)                                                                                                                     | 1 (0)                                                                                                                                   | 1 (0)                                                                                                                                       | 2 (1)                                                                                                                                   | 2 (1)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| AGP (free)                             | 0 (0)                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1 (1)                                                                                                                     | 0 (0)                                                                                                                                   | 0 (0)                                                                                                                                       | 0 (0)                                                                                                                                   | 0 (0)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Serial ATA (free)                      | 4 (3)                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2 (1)                                                                                                                     | 4 (3)                                                                                                                                   | 5 (4)                                                                                                                                       | 4 (3)                                                                                                                                   | 5 (4)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Memory (free)                          | 4 (3)                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 4 (0)                                                                                                                     | 2 (0)                                                                                                                                   | 4 (2)                                                                                                                                       | 4 (2)                                                                                                                                   | 4 (2)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Drive bays 3½in (free)                 | 6 (4)                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 7 (5)                                                                                                                     | 3 (2)                                                                                                                                   | 5 (3)                                                                                                                                       | 4 (2)                                                                                                                                   | 4 (2)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Drive bays 5¼in (free)                 | 4 (3)                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 4 (3)                                                                                                                     | 4 (3)                                                                                                                                   | 3 (2)                                                                                                                                       | 3 (2)                                                                                                                                   | 3 (1)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| HARD DISK                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Model                                  | Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6V250F0)                                                                                                                                                                          | Maxtor DiamondMax 21 (6A250E0)                                                                                            | Western Digital Caviar SE (WD2500)S                                                                                                     | Samsung Spinpoint C (SP2504C)                                                                                                               | Seagate Barracuda 7200.10 (ST3250620AS)                                                                                                 | Western Digital Caviar SE16 (WD3200KS)                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Interface                              | SATA 300                                                                                                                                                                                                | SATA 300                                                                                                                  | SATA 300                                                                                                                                | SATA 300                                                                                                                                    | SATA 300                                                                                                                                | SATA 300                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Capacity                               | 250GB (234GB)                                                                                                                                                                                           | 250GB (233GB)                                                                                                             | 250GB (228GB)                                                                                                                           | 250GB (233GB)                                                                                                                               | 250GB (233GB)                                                                                                                           | 320GB (298GB)                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Spin speed                             | 7,200rpm                                                                                                                                                                                                | 7,200rpm                                                                                                                  | 7,200rpm                                                                                                                                | 7,200rpm                                                                                                                                    | 7,200rpm                                                                                                                                | 7,200rpm                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| GRAPHICS                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Technology                             | PCI Express                                                                                                                                                                                             | PCI Express                                                                                                               | PCI Express                                                                                                                             | PCI Express                                                                                                                                 | PCI Express                                                                                                                             | PCI Express                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Graphics card                          | 256MB Albatron GeForce 6800GT                                                                                                                                                                           | 256MB Xpertvision GeForce 7900GS                                                                                          | 256MB Leadtek WinFast PX7600 GS TDH                                                                                                     | 256MB Sapphire Radeon X1950 Pro                                                                                                             | 256MB Asus EN7600GT/2DHT/256M                                                                                                           | 256MB Inno3D GF 7600GT                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Graphics chipset                       | Nvidia GeForce 6800GT                                                                                                                                                                                   | Nvidia GeForce 7900GS                                                                                                     | Nvidia GeForce 7600GS                                                                                                                   | ATI Radeon X1950 Pro                                                                                                                        | Nvidia GeForce 7600GT                                                                                                                   | Nvidia GeForce 7600GT                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Graphics/video ports                   | 2x DVI, S-video                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2x DVI, component                                                                                                         | DVI, D-sub, component                                                                                                                   | 2x DVI, component                                                                                                                           | 2x DVI, component                                                                                                                       | 2x DVI, S-video, component, composite                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| SOUND                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Sound card                             | Realtek High Definition Audio                                                                                                                                                                           | Realtek High Definition Audio                                                                                             | Realtek High Definition Audio                                                                                                           | Realtek High Definition Audio                                                                                                               | SoundMax HD                                                                                                                             | Realtek High Definition Audio                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Sound card outputs                     | 7.1 line out                                                                                                                                                                                            | 7.1 line out                                                                                                              | 7.1 line out                                                                                                                            | 7.1 line out                                                                                                                                | 5.1 line out, coaxial S/PDIF out                                                                                                        | 7.1 line out                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Speakers                               | HiPoint 2.0                                                                                                                                                                                             | Logitech S200 2.1                                                                                                         | Creative i-Trigue 3220 2.1                                                                                                              | Creative SBS 380 2.1                                                                                                                        | Creative Inspire T6100 5.1                                                                                                              | Zoostorm 2.1                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| REMOVABLE DRIVES                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Floppy drive 3½in                      | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Yes                                                                                                                       | No                                                                                                                                      | Yes                                                                                                                                         | No                                                                                                                                      | No                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Memory card reader                     | None                                                                                                                                                                                                    | None                                                                                                                      | None                                                                                                                                    | None                                                                                                                                        | CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive, xD                                                | CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive, xD                                                |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Optical drive                          | BenQ DW1670 (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 32X CD-R, 32X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD)                                                                    | NEC ND-5170A (18X DVD+R, 18X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+R DL, 8X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 32X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD) | Sony AW-G170A (18X DVD+R, 18X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+R DL, 8X DVD-R DL, 12X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 40X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD) | TSSTcorp SH-S182D (18X DVD+R, 18X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 8X DVD-R DL, 12X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 40X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD) | Sony AW-G170A (18X DVD+R, 18X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 8X DVD-R DL, 12X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 40X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD) | Sony AW-G170A (18X DVD+R, 18X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 8X DVD-R DL, 12X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 40X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD) | Lite-on DRW-6S160P (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD), Lite-on SHD-16P1S (16X DVD, 48X CD) |
| DISPLAY                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Size and technology                    | 17in LCD                                                                                                                                                                                                | 19in LCD                                                                                                                  | 19in widescreen LCD                                                                                                                     | 19in widescreen LCD                                                                                                                         | 19in LCD                                                                                                                                | 19in LCD                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Model                                  | Hanns.G HX171D                                                                                                                                                                                          | AMW X1900DS                                                                                                               | Cibox C1905                                                                                                                             | Cibox C1905                                                                                                                                 | Sony SDM-HS95P                                                                                                                          | AOC LM965                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Native resolution                      | 1,280x1,024                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1,280x1,024                                                                                                               | 1,440x900                                                                                                                               | 1,440x900                                                                                                                                   | 1,280x1,024                                                                                                                             | 1,280x1,024                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Response time                          | 8ms                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 8ms                                                                                                                       | 5ms                                                                                                                                     | 5ms                                                                                                                                         | 8ms                                                                                                                                     | 8ms                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Inputs                                 | DVI, D-sub                                                                                                                                                                                              | DVI, D-sub                                                                                                                | D-sub                                                                                                                                   | D-sub                                                                                                                                       | DVI, D-sub                                                                                                                              | D-sub                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| OTHER HARDWARE                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Modem                                  | No                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No                                                                                                                        | No                                                                                                                                      | No                                                                                                                                          | No                                                                                                                                      | No                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Keyboard                               | HiPoint Multimedia Keyboard                                                                                                                                                                             | Microsoft Basic Keyboard 1.0A                                                                                             | Logitech Deluxe 650 Cordless                                                                                                            | Internet 1500 Cordless Keyboard                                                                                                             | Logitech Deluxe 650 Cordless                                                                                                            | Microsoft Basic Keyboard 1.0A                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Mouse                                  | HiPoint Optical Mouse                                                                                                                                                                                   | Microsoft Basic Optical Mouse 1.0A                                                                                        | Logitech Cordless Optical Mouse                                                                                                         | Internet 1500 Laser Cordless Mouse                                                                                                          | Logitech Cordless Optical Mouse                                                                                                         | Microsoft Basic Optical Mouse 1.0A                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Keyboard/mouse rating                  | ★                                                                                                                                                                                                       | ★★★                                                                                                                       | ★★★                                                                                                                                     | ★★★★★                                                                                                                                       | ★★★                                                                                                                                     | ★★★                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Extras                                 | Epson Stylus Photo R265, gamepad                                                                                                                                                                        | None                                                                                                                      | None                                                                                                                                    | None                                                                                                                                        | None                                                                                                                                    | None                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| SOFTWARE                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Software included                      | Microsoft Office Student and Teacher Edition 2003, Eidos Home Entertainment Game Pack ( <a href="http://tinyurl.com/yda4sx">http://tinyurl.com/yda4sx</a> ), CyberLink PowerDVD 6, Ahead Nero Burning 7 | Ahead Nero 6, CyberLink PowerDVD 6                                                                                        | Microsoft Works 8.5, BullGuard Antivirus 5, Roxio Easy Media Creator 7, CyberLink PowerDVD 6                                            | Ahead Nero 6, CyberLink PowerDVD 6                                                                                                          | Works 8.5, CyberLink PowerDVD 5, Power2Go 4, PowerProducer 3, PowerDirector 3, PowerBackup, MediaShow SE, PowerCinema 4                 | Ahead Nero 6, CyberLink PowerDVD 6                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Operating system                       | Windows XP Home Edition (Vista upgrade included)                                                                                                                                                        | Windows XP Home Edition                                                                                                   | Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005                                                                                                    | Windows XP Home Edition                                                                                                                     | Windows XP Home Edition                                                                                                                 | Windows XP Home Edition                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Operating system restore option        | Windows CD                                                                                                                                                                                              | Windows CD                                                                                                                | Restore partition, restore disc                                                                                                         | Windows CD                                                                                                                                  | Windows CD, restore partition                                                                                                           | Windows CD                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| BUYING INFORMATION                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Parts and labour warranty              | One year RTB                                                                                                                                                                                            | One year RTB                                                                                                              | Two years onsite, one year RTB                                                                                                          | One year onsite, one year RTB                                                                                                               | One year onsite, two years RTB                                                                                                          | Three years onsite                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Technical support times                | 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat                                                                                                                                                                           | 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri                                                                                                     | 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat                                                                                                                      | 10am-6pm Mon-Fri                                                                                                                            | 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri                                                                                                                      | 9am-6pm Mon-Fri                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Company founded                        | 1993                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1993                                                                                                                      | 1983                                                                                                                                    | 1999                                                                                                                                        | 1987                                                                                                                                    | 1993                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Technical support staff                | 10                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 7                                                                                                                         | 83                                                                                                                                      | 6                                                                                                                                           | 45                                                                                                                                      | 14                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Employees                              | 107                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 30                                                                                                                        | 398                                                                                                                                     | 15                                                                                                                                          | 275                                                                                                                                     | 70                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Price including delivery and VAT       | £749                                                                                                                                                                                                    | £750                                                                                                                      | £749                                                                                                                                    | £749                                                                                                                                        | £749                                                                                                                                    | £749                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Price including delivery excluding VAT | £637                                                                                                                                                                                                    | £638                                                                                                                      | £637                                                                                                                                    | £637                                                                                                                                        | £637                                                                                                                                    | £637                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Supplier                               | Aria                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Eclipse                                                                                                                   | Evesham                                                                                                                                 | Gladiator                                                                                                                                   | Mesh                                                                                                                                    | PC Nextday                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Phone                                  | 08704 992499                                                                                                                                                                                            | 08707 456000                                                                                                              | 08701 609500                                                                                                                            | 08456 444666                                                                                                                                | 08700 464747                                                                                                                            | Web only                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Web address                            | <a href="http://www.aria.co.uk">www.aria.co.uk</a>                                                                                                                                                      | <a href="http://www.eclipse-computers.com">www.eclipse-computers.com</a>                                                  | <a href="http://www.evesham.com">www.evesham.com</a>                                                                                    | <a href="http://www.gladiatorcomputers.com">www.gladiatorcomputers.com</a>                                                                  | <a href="http://www.meshcomputers.com">www.meshcomputers.com</a>                                                                        | <a href="http://www.pcnextday.co.uk">www.pcnextday.co.uk</a>                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                      |